

## Member Spotlight

# Emergency Coordinator and Digital Guru Samantha Henley, KEØLMY

Samantha Henley's, KEØLMY, most recent achievement was being invited onto the Indianapolis Motor Speedway special events team, W9IMS, and operating during the Indy 500. She's a volunteer for several organizations and is generous with her time and assistance. Her current positions are Assistant Director of the Camden County, Missouri Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and Deputy Director of Benton County EMA. She also manages the finances for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), runs the Camden County CERT website and Facebook page, acts as Emergency Coordinator for Benton County ARES (and runs their website, blog, and Facebook page), is Public Information Officer (PIO) for the Warsaw Fire Protection District, and serves as the Net Control Operator and program manager for the Region A Healthcare Net. She is the president of Dam Amateur Radio Klub, KEØTGG (DARK), a special events club which supports the Benton County ARES. In addition to all of the above, she and her husband Roger, KDØWXT, are the parents of two children — Renee, KEØLMZ, and Alex, KEØYGT.

### A Family Affair

Samantha was introduced to radio by her husband in 2016. They were homeschooling their kids and Sam thought that radio could be a good learning tool. "I thought it would be a great science class for my children," she said. "You don't have to know everything right away. As the hobby grows and evolves, you can learn new things all the time." Renee regularly runs the Region A Healthcare Net and the weekly Benton County ARES net, and both she and Alex are involved



with the Warsaw Cadet and Junior Firefighter Program and the teen CERT program. Alex is currently studying for his General-class license. Like their mother, they're interested in emergency response. Samantha explained, "With cell phone service being spotty in Missouri, I love the idea of having another tool to use if I or anyone I came across was in trouble and needed to call for help." Together with her children, they built their own dipole and J-pole antennas.

Samantha faced some challenges when getting involved in amateur radio, but she persevered. "I ran into the same problem most male-dominated hobbies have," she said, with the misperception that "this is no place for women." But, she affirmed, when you approach anything with an open mind and a willingness to learn, you'll be met with fresh perspectives. As a homeschool teacher, she especially values open dialogue. She said, "Be willing to listen and don't assume or act like you know everything. We can all learn from each other."

### COVID-19 Response

A desire to learn and grow is even more essential during the time of a

global pandemic. Adopting a positive outlook, Samantha sees this time as an opportunity. The Benton County ARES conducted a Simulated Emergency Test (SET), which had to be altered due to a spike in active COVID-19 cases in the county. Samantha explained, "Normally, the EMA, CERT, and ARES for our county have a physical, as well as an on-the-air, portion to the SET. This year, we had to cancel the physical portion, but we will still hold our on-the-air portion." She said this change in plans "forced us to adapt and overcome the challenge, and it prepares us for the chance that we may not always be able to meet in person during large-scale emergencies."

### Web Connections

Through their website and social media pages, the Benton County ARES has been able to "reach out to people who otherwise would not know this group exists." Through social media and digital technology, Samantha hopes to connect with a variety of people. She said, "I wholeheartedly believe all types of media and communications can work in tandem."

Samantha is passionate about helping others, in both emergency situations and her personal life. Her Facebook page sums up much of her philosophy, where she said, "There is nothing more giving than a volunteer's heart." When asked what she would say if she could send out a message to every ham, Samantha answered, "Persevere. Decide why or what you want and pursue it, no matter what others say. Do this hobby for you, not anyone else."